

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 to 52 (Cancelled)

53. (Currently Amended) An extracorporeal method for treating blood from a patient comprising:

a. inserting a withdrawal needle in a surface peripheral vein in an extremity of the patient[[:]] wherein the surface peripheral vein is near a skin surface of the patient;

b. applying a suction to the withdrawal needle to draw blood from the surface peripheral vein through the withdrawal needle;

c. determining that an insufficient amount of blood is withdrawn through the needle by determining that the withdrawn blood is below a predetermined threshold amount of blood;

d. in response to the determination, replacing the needle with a blood withdrawal catheter inserted in the surface peripheral vein, and maneuvering the catheter through the vein to position a tip of the catheter in one of a large vein, great vein or vena cava to access a reservoir of blood for continuous blood withdrawal;

e. drawing blood from the reservoir of blood into the withdrawal catheter and into the withdrawal blood tube of an extracorporeal blood circuit, and

f. applying a suction pressure to the withdrawal blood tube to cause blood to flow into the blood withdrawal catheter.

54. (Previously Presented) An extracorporeal method as in claim 53 wherein the needle has a length of 35 cm to 40 cm.

55. (Previously Presented) An extracorporeal method as in claim 53 further comprising after step (a) and before step (b) a determination that an amount of blood being withdrawn is insufficient for treating the blood because a blood flow rate through the needle is less than 40 milliliter per minute.

56. (Previously Presented) An extracorporeal method as in claim 53 wherein the treatment is ultrafiltration and the catheter is positioned in the vein for a period of at least four hours.

57. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 53 where the treatment is hemofiltration and the catheter is positioned in the vein for a period of at least four hours.

58. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 53 where the treatment is dialysis and the catheter is positioned in the vein for a period of at least four hours.

59. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 53 where the treatment is ultrafiltration.

60. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 53 wherein the surface peripheral vein is in an arm of the patient.